

VICTORIES of WIT and GRIT ON THE GRIDIRON

How Mike Murphy's Emotional Appeal, the Pluck of the Dog Mascot with the Hot Poker, the Badgering of the Opposing Lineman and Other "Inside" Incidents Have Turned the Tide of Defeat in Big Football Games

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FEW games require more of skill, level headed stratagem and cool courage than does football. At the same time coaches, players and "rooters" know that in no other game do cheering and like appeals to the emotional, excitable side of a man's nature contribute so largely to a victory. Games have been won by working the men into an almost hysterical state of abandon and disregard of injury.

Tricks also figure prominently in the winning or losing of a game. The old hurdle plays, where a man was allowed to jump clean over the opposing line, were productive of tricks and a great deal of play that was not exactly clean. For instance, if one of the half backs was to hurdle the line the full back and the other half back would run each side of him, and at the proper moment the hurdler would spring into the air, shove his feet out in front of him, and the men who had hold of him would hurl him straight at the opposing full back or whoever might be in a position to stop him. The result was that some player in the defence got the hurdler's feet square in the face and was very often carried from the field after one such play. Injury also was frequent to the hurdler, for the opposing team would catch him while he was off his feet, throw him to the ground and find an opportunity to stamp on him.

Another occasional abuse of the privilege to hurdle was the wearing of leather handles on the trousers. It was found at the close of the last season during which hurdling was allowed that many of the college players who had attained remarkable prominence as hurdlers had gone through the season with heavy leather strips on the sides of their moleskin trousers, one on each side near the knee and one at each hip. When a hurdle was called for two players would grasp these handles and, picking the man with the ball clean off his feet, throw him bodily over the opposing line. This assured a considerable gain, for by the time the man landed on the ground, if he could go no further, the ball would be declared dead before he was thrown back by the defence, and the required distance, if it was only a few feet, was almost invariably gained.

Besides this many injuries resulted both to the hurdler and the men in the defence. Two hundred pounds of bone and muscle hurled at a man's head is likely to do some damage, and when two hundred pounds is thrown bodily over another man's head it falls with a crash. It was the discovery of the leather handle trick which was in a great measure responsible for the rules prohibiting hurdling.

Of course, as in every other game, ragging plays a prominent part in football. A man with a cool head and plenty of nerve can tantalize his opponent into playing foul. Very few men break the rules deliberately, but in the heat of excitement and under pressure it is not to be marvelled at that a man may use his fists or jam his knee into an opponent.

It is a common sight to see a player in the line swing his arms flail-like when the team is lined up for a scrimmage. This may be considered a waste of energy, for, of course, he is not permitted to strike the other man, but it has its effect. It rattles the opponent. Unless he is a battered veteran he does not know just what to expect. He is apt to keep his eyes on those whirling arms instead of on the other man's face or on the ball. It has a tantalizing effect, and if continued the rattled player may become so irritated that he will unconsciously swing his own arm and land a punch on his tormentor's face. If the umpire sees it a foul is called. Even if the officials do not see it the player who struck the other immediately loses his head and may become useless. Precision of movement and a machine-like co-operation are essential to good football, and if a man can destroy that in another team his own mates have them at a marked disadvantage.

A player, for instance, will start out to rattle the left tackle on the opposing team, and every play will then be directed at that left tackle. The man might just as well not be there when once he becomes demoralized.

Harry Van Hovenburg, an all-American end who played on the Columbia University team which defeated Princeton 6 to 5 in 1900, tells about one of the tricks which helped to win that game.

"Princeton had an almost impenetrable line," said Mr. Van Hovenburg the other day, "and although we had a strong offence, it looked as though there was little chance of our ever making any headway through their line. Ours was a speedy team, but end running is always more or less uncertain and we could not depend upon that for a victory.

"When the game was well under way we found that neither side could do much through the line. Princeton held like a concrete wall, but there was one little thing that had developed which gave us the chance we wanted. Our men were all old at the game and there was little chance of rattling them. We had played a hard schedule and were all well seasoned.

"The quarter back, who was a clever little fellow, had used his head, and so had the men on the line, and we discovered that Williamson Pell, who played right tackle for Princeton, opposite Dave Smythe, our left tackle, was easily rattled. He was an old player, but we could see that he was nervous. The quarter tipped Dave Smythe and he started in to rattle Pell. "It seems like a funny way to do it, but every time the signals were called Smythe told Pell where the play was going.

"Here, you big tub," Dave would say, "we're going through you now."

"At first the Princeton man thought it was a ruse and expected the play to go through some other place, but the ball would be sent right at his position. He couldn't understand that, and when Dave next told him the play was going through the Princeton left guard Pell thought sure it would be directed at himself, and instead of being ready to run round and back up left guard, he got ready to block it through his own position.

"The play did go through left guard, and that got Pell guessing. After that Dave Smythe told him every place the ball was going. Pell didn't know what to do. He couldn't figure out what the game was. He lost his head, his confusion was somehow communicated to the other men, and the whole line became more or less demoralized.

"When we saw how badly Pell was rattled we threw every play right at him. He knew it was coming, and, knowing it, began to worry as to whether he could stop it. Of course Princeton got onto it, and the whole defence, at least all that could be spared, tried to bolster up right tackle, but it was no use. They were rattled, and Pell, who had been one of their mainstays, was worst of all. He was game and stuck to it, but it was too much for him. Finally he was hurt and had to be taken from the game.

"Princeton braced toward the end, but it was too late and we had the game. I think we would have won anyway, but the victory was partly due to that trick. It was a legitimate trick, and I have often heard Pell laugh about it since. It just goes to show what freak things may contribute to a victory. This is a case where telling a man just where the play was going upset the whole machinery of a team instead of spoiling the chances of the offence, as one might expect."

Old Eli's Preparation.

Yale, noted for the completeness of her preparations and for the details which she works out in the development of a team, has a little plan which always seems to bring good results. It is not exactly a trick, but it is an unusual little twist in the training of a team. A few days before the big games with Harvard and with Princeton the Yale coaches import a number of uniforms of the college the team is about to meet.



The Men Who Had Hold of Him Would Hurl Him Straight at the Opposing Full Back.

"Don't try to rush the ball," said Morley to him as he left the side lines. "Just kick. You have time for one play and that is all. It's a hard goal, but you can make it."

The ball was passed. Schultz balanced it for a second. The timekeeper had the whistle in his mouth, his eyes were on the watch. There was a hush, and just before the opposing line broke through the new quarter back booted the ball.

Straight between the goal posts it sped. The whistle blew while it was in the air, but the game could not be called until it struck the ground. That one kick tied the score. The green quarter back, in the few seconds of football he ever played against a team from another college, had done what was expected of him.

Four years he had been kept on tap for some moment when his one good quality might be needed, and when that moment came a wise coach utilized it and saved his team from defeat.

Every good coach knows how to make the strongest appeal to his own men, and he knows at just what moment to strike them. There is little opportunity during a game, even between the periods, to correct faults in the technique of play. That has to be done during the interval before the next game, but the instructions afford an excellent chance to arouse the spirit of the men. Sometimes what is needed is doggedness, sometimes fire, or it may be coolness, confidence or aggressiveness.

For tact and adeptness in sizing up his men and striking them at just the right angle at just the proper time there are few superior to "Mike" Murphy, for years the trainer of the Yale track team and now general athletic trainer for the University of Pennsylvania. To "Mike" Murphy, the men who played in the game say, Pennsylvania owes her victory of 12 to 6 over Harvard in 1905. And "Mike" Murphy had only a three minute talk with the team between the halves.

Harvard went down to Philadelphia that year with scarcely a score chalked up against her, to meet Pennsylvania with a battered and pretty much used up team. The odds were all in favor of Harvard, and she played a plucky game, for all there was in her.

When the whistle sounded the end of the first half the score was 6 to 6. That looks as if the honors had been equally divided, but they had not. Harvard had gained almost half as much ground on straight ahead as will. Her failure to score offensively was due to a series of flukes and the marvellous obstinacy with which the Quaker team always held in the last ditch. Penna was forced to kick almost every time she had possession of the ball. Her touchdown had been scored on a fluke. Things looked blue to Pennsylvania and Harvard, knowing it, added to her other advantages the knowledge that Penna was demoralized.

But over in the club house, while the men were resting, the Quaker lads listened to a talk that fired them with the spirit of demons. They would have rushed onto the field at that second half, and they literally swept Harvard from the field. With the coaches of the Philadelphia team nodding their heads in a serious, almost hopeless consultation "Mike" Murphy climbed onto a table and began to talk. He is not an orator, but there was conviction behind his words, and something else that reached the hearts of the men.

"Do you boys think you're playin' football?" he demanded, "or are you out here givin' an exhibition of lofty rumblin'? That's what it looks like to me. Why, those big red fellows out there just roll around the field as though you were the ball. Haven't you any pride? Do you want a lot of bean eaters up there in Boston to crow over the hash their team made of you? Do you want those Cambridge highbrows to build bonfires to-morrow night that will light up the Charles River and give an imitation of the Chelsea fire? Why, they'll drink all the beer in Boston if they trim you, and champagne, too. Yes, and on good Penn money at that. Your friends will be livin' on bean sandwiches and courtin' cheese cubes at crescent counters if you let those fellows get away with this."

"Myself—it almost made me cry to see the way they toyed with you. That big full back there, why, he nearly ate you up, Folwell. Honest, one time I thought he'd gobble you right down, cleats an' all. And say, Robinson, why did you let that guard walk around on you that way? I suppose his leather spikes

Every time that Torrey kicked for Pennsylvania Levine and Scarlett, the ends, were down the field almost before the ball, dropping their man as soon as he touched the piskin. Harvard was dazed. The men were seemingly paralyzed before the dash and aggressiveness displayed by the team which had seemed as good as beaten.

Still, whenever the Philadelphia boys rushed the ball to within striking distance of Harvard's goal, the men from Cambridge held. But nothing could check the spirit which "Mike" Murphy had roused in his men. In the last few minutes of play Lamson, played right tackle for Pennsylvania, was called behind the line to take the ball. Only two yards was needed for a touchdown. With a crash he hit the defensive line between Pierce and White, Harvard's left guard and centre. For a moment the seething mass of men swayed back and forth, then straggling out in a long tumbling line, shot clean behind the goal posts. Torrey kicked the goal and Pennsylvania had won the game, 12 to 6.

It was a pure case of working on the emotional side of the men until they achieved what seemed impossible. Everything else sank into oblivion behind the one great passion to fight and to win which the simple talk of a trainer had roused. "Mike" Murphy is still hale and hearty. There is great dispute as to whether he really had consumption at the time and really thought that he would not be with the men much longer. That does not worry the Pennsylvania men. They know that he offered each of them something to fight for, and they say that it was due to him that Harvard went back to Cambridge defeated.

When a Mascot Brought Victory.

Keeping a mascot is very generally considered to be a little indulgence in sentimentality. Faith in one is probably regarded as a relic of superstition, on a par with the fetch of a savage, but Bill, a white bull terrier, the mascot of the Columbia football team, was quite directly responsible for Columbia's victory of 12 to 6 over Cornell in 1905.

Cornell had netted a score of six in the first half and Columbia had not made a point. The team had played a wearing game with Princeton the week before, and the men were in poor condition. There seemed to be little hope of scoring against Cornell, whose line was almost impenetrable. The men were more or less discouraged, and added to that some of them were a trifle overtrained. There was a distinct atmosphere of gloom in the dressing room when the men went there for the intermission.

Bill, the white bull terrier, was the only one who

showed any signs of liveliness and spirit. Even the coaches seemed to have given up hope.

One of Bill's favorite pastimes was to tug and wrestle with a stick when some one would hold the other end of it.

It was cold in the dressing room and one of the trainers shook the ashes from the grate of the stove, using the poker until the end which had been in the fire became red hot. When he finally laid it down it had lost its color but was still very warm. Bill, not knowing that the poker was not a stick for him to play with, caught the end in his paw. The soft flesh of his lips, seared and burned black, but he shook the metal stick and refused to let it go. Two or three of the men grabbed him and tried to force him to open his mouth. They had to choke him to remove the poker from between his teeth, and all the time he held grimly to it he was shaking it.

Von Saltna, the big full back, took the dog in his lap. "Johnnie" Fisher, who was captain of the team, jumped to his feet.

"Did you see that?" he yelled at his team mates. "That dog has nerve. He has the kind of fight in him that would win this game. Look at his lips. They are burned black. And he never whimpered and he never let up on the fight. He'd fight that poker if it burned clean through him. How does that make you fellows feel? I know what it does to me. It makes me feel mightily ashamed, and it ought to you. If we haven't it in us ourselves to win this game we owe it to Bill to do so."

Just let's think of Bill this next half, boys, and if something hurts remember how Bill acted when something hurt him. Come on now, it's time to get back on the field. Just play for Bill, Bill, Bill."

The dog led the men out of the little shack and ran barking and cawing about the field. All through the game he barked and yelled at the struggling men on the gridiron. Cornell played a better game than in the first half, but Columbia responded to the plea that Fisher had made for the dog.

"There wasn't one of us," said Phil von Saltna after the game, "who didn't see a picture of Bill there in the club house fighting with that hot poker every time we thought we were all in. There wasn't anything could have stopped us when we thought of the way he growled and shook his head with that cruel iron burning into his lips. We heard every yelp he gave and it simply drove us."

It was a crippled, battered team that journeyed back to New York. The undergraduates who watched the newspaper headlines wondered what had been behind Columbia's great brace in the second half. The little claus that gathered that night in the fraternity houses and the dormitories advanced many theories, but none of them dreamed that Bill had won the game. Many of them are still ignorant of that, but the men who played always place the glory where, it is due.